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ABSTRACT

This report is based on the findings of the Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study (LACLAS), which consulted with Latinos to determine the priorities, programs, and strategies for meeting the needs of their community in Los Angeles County (California). The study's main objective was to obtain information to assist governmental and philanthropic agencies, and the business sector, in funding programs to benefit Latinos. The methodology for the study included the following components: (1) a demographic review of Latinos in Los Angeles County; (2) a community survey of Latinos; (3) a leadership survey of Latinos and others who are generally recognized as leaders in the community; and (4) focus group meetings with a cross-section of Latino leaders. The information elicited identified the following primary areas of concern that require a comprehensive funding effort: (1) political participation; (2) education; (3) economic development; and (4) leadership development. Goals relating to the following issues are also discussed: (1) health; (2) social services; (3) immigration; (4) legal services; (5) crime; and (6) housing. The comprehensive involvement of public and private entities in issue selection and program design and implementation is described. A summary review of recommendations for funding priorities is provided. (JS)

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One Voice, One Future

A Latino Funding Agenda from the Latino Community and its Leadership

The Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study
Executive Summary

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In an unprecedented study,
the Los Angeles County Latino community
was asked to identify its most urgent
social, economic and political needs.

The community and its leadership respond:

Introduction

As a community, Latinos affect every facet of life in Los Angeles County and, in the years to come, their impact will grow. By 2010, Latinos are expected to make up more than 40 percent of the total population. Consider other equally significant data:

- **Latinos in Los Angeles County command a purchasing power of almost $22 billion.**
- **Latino children make up 45 percent of all Los Angeles County public school students, 60 percent of all students in grades K-4, and 80 percent of the limited English proficient population.**
- **By the year 2000, more than half of the Los Angeles County workforce will be "minority," the largest group being Latino.**

Paralleling these developments within the Latino community is Los Angeles County's growth as a region and as a national and international economic and cultural center. Consider the following:

- California is the world's sixth largest "nation" in terms of GNP.
- In 1987, greater metropolitan Los Angeles produced $250 billion worth of goods and services, making this region the 11th largest "nation" in terms of GNP.
- The Los Angeles County population is currently 8.9 million and is expected to be 11.2 million by 2010.

These trends would seem to indicate that Latinos are poised to realize a bright and hopeful future. The truth is, however, that Los Angeles Latinos face formidable challenges that must be addressed now. The 1980 Census revealed the following challenges facing the Latino community:

- **Almost 60 percent of Latinos in Los Angeles County have less than a high school education.**
- **Almost 1 in 5 Latino families (18.2 percent) are at or below the poverty level compared with 1 in 14 Anglo families (7.2 percent).**
- **Latinos own proportionately fewer homes than any other racial/ethnic group.**
- **86 percent of the Latino labor force are wage and salary earners; only 9.4 percent are in managerial and professional positions compared with 28.0 percent for Anglos, 28.5 percent for Asians and 18.1 percent for Blacks.**

The greatest challenge facing those who seek to help Los Angeles County Latinos is setting priorities...deciding where to focus limited resources for maximum effectiveness.

Leaders in government, business and the charitable sectors must decide which of many pressing problems should be addressed. Education? Housing? Crime? Health? In what order? Upon what criteria will such decisions be based?

Since 1987, a major study has been under way that is driven by the unique yet entirely logical premise that it is Latinos themselves who should be consulted regarding the prioritization of needs in the Latino community.

The Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study (LACLAS) is an unprecedented community-based effort. ***One Voice, One Future*** is the LACLAS study's consensus report on priorities, programs and strategies for meeting the needs of the Latino community. Conducted under the auspices of the Tomás Rivera Center and funded by the Ford Foundation, the ARCO Foundation and the James Irvine Foundation, the study takes a giant step beyond merely cataloging the problems facing Los Angeles Latinos. The LACLAS study offers a menu of recommendations that public and private providers of assistance can use to meet most effectively the challenges and opportunities Latinos will face in this and the next century.

One Voice, One Future is more than mere theory. It is an agenda for action and an expression of hope from Latinos in Los Angeles County.

Study Methodology

Nearly as significant as the findings of the LACLAS study is the methodology by which it was conducted. In a carefully conceived four-part process, the study began with an overview of Latino demographics and progressed to a broad survey of Los Angeles County Latinos, then to a survey of Latino leaders and, finally, to focus groups for an in-depth examination of issues identified in the first three steps. Each of these components served as a backdrop for the one that followed, creating a cohesive progression of informed thought.

Demographic Review

The review of existing demographic data on Los Angeles County Latinos included an examination of such areas as population trends and projections, income and occupational characteristics and educational status. The demographic review made important connections between such indicators as demand for skilled labor and the percentage of Latinos finishing high school and college. The LACLAS study examined the ethnic profile of Los Angeles public school students and offered insights into the implications of demographic change in the region.

Community Survey

Between January and March 1988, a telephone survey was conducted of Los Angeles County Latinos, seeking their views on the most important problems facing their families, on discrimination and political access, on employment opportunities and education, on the effectiveness of government and health/social services and on housing and recreational opportunities.

Latinos and, for comparative purposes, Anglos were interviewed using questionnaires designed by experts with extensive experience in similar surveys.[1] This second component of the LACLAS study provided a data base upon which the next two phases were built. A profile of the community survey respondents follows.

LACLAS Community Respondent Profile

- The average age is 34 years (compared with a 42 year average for the Anglo respondents).
- 57 percent are married.
- Almost 60 percent prefer being interviewed in Spanish.
- 55 percent are not U.S. citizens.
- Almost 60 percent make less than $20,000 per year.

Leadership Survey

A mail survey was conducted in April and May 1988 among Latinos and others who are generally recognized as leaders in advocacy organizations, media, elected offices, corporate businesses, small businesses, labor unions, the legal profession, higher education, women's issues, professional organizations, youth service organizations, law enforcement and other areas.[2]

"Leaders" were defined as persons who influence the Latino community of Los Angeles County. These individuals were identified through a nominations process that built on a core group of persons identified as leaders. Each respondent was asked questions concerning the most important problems facing Latinos today, the quality of public services provided to Latinos and his or her views on such issues as education, employment, economic development, health, housing, immigration and others. A profile of the leadership survey respondents appears below.

LACLAS Leadership Respondent Profile

- The mean age is 43 years.
- About 60 percent are male.
- About 70 percent are Democrats.
- About 90 percent hold either a college degree, a graduate degree, or an advanced degree.
- About 95 percent are U.S. citizens.
- Almost half earn $70,000 per year or more.

Focus Group Meetings

A cross-section of Latino leaders representing various sectors of the community participated in focus groups, which were conducted in three phases in July and August 1988.[3]

In Phase One, issue areas were prioritized and defined. Participants were asked to reach consensus on:

- the issue areas that should be considered for funding;
- the order in which these areas should be addressed;
- how each of the funding priorities should be defined; and
- how to reconcile discrepancies between the priorities of the leaders and those of the community.

In Phase Two, primary funding priorities were determined. Participants were given listings of the priorities set in Phase One and asked to comment on:

- the areas in which the Latino community could make the most headway by the year 2000;
- the conditions that lend themselves to progress in each of these areas; and
- the types of programs and strategies needed in the next 10 to 20 years to realize progress in these areas.

In Phase Three, additional funding priorities were addressed. Participants were asked to discuss:

- action needed to give these areas the level of attention commensurate with their importance; and
- the conditions that deter as opposed to the strategies that advance progress in these areas.

The focus group process provided a rich source of expertise and insights that elaborated on and substantiated the findings of the Leadership and Community Surveys.

Notes:

1. 493 Latinos and 200 Anglos 16 years of age and older were randomly selected to participate in the Community Survey.
2. A sample of 360 leaders was identified; 242 responded to the Leadership Survey.
3. 59 leaders participated in eight focus groups.

Primary Funding Priorities

The broad objective of the LACLAS study was to obtain information to assist governmental and philanthropic agencies as well as the business sector in funding programs that benefit Latinos.

As the study evolved, an overriding theme emerged. Of the many needs identified by the Latino community, the problems faced by ***women and children*** warrant special attention. That is not to imply that the entire community is not in need. Rather, the acute vulnerability and the historical neglect of women and children assure that even minimal attention to their needs will reap positive dividends for the entire community.

The study also recognizes that not all the solutions to the community's problems can be effected exclusively through the funding of programs. Government, for example, could do more by viewing public service recipients as active participants in the decision-making process and not just as passive beneficiaries. More attention needs to be given to the goal of empowering individuals and organizations in the Latino community. This process can be facilitated through creative partnerships between the community and public, private and philanthropic sectors.

To establish a funding agenda and related strategies for meeting the needs of Los Angeles County Latinos, the LACLAS study identified four primary funding priorities and six additional ones. The demographic review, community and leadership surveys and focus groups identified the following primary issues which require a comprehensive funding effort to achieve the most significant results.

- **Political Participation**
- **Education**
- **Economic Development**
- **Leadership Development**

These funding priorities are discussed in detail in the following pages. Additional priorities are also discussed as listed here:

- **Health**
- **Social Services**
- **Immigration**
- **Legal Services**
- **Crime**
- **Housing**

Political Participation

The well-being of a community is related to the involvement of its members in its institutions. Involvement in the community's political processes and institutions engenders a sense of ownership. Through political participation individuals also develop a vested interest in the betterment of their society.

Goal:
To increase levels of Latino political involvement

Programs:
- **Naturalization and citizenship**
- **Civic pride**
- **Practical aspects of political process**

Strategies:
- **Simpler voting registration**
- **Coalition development**
- **Political agendas at all levels**
- **Accountability of elected officials**
- **Accessibility of elected officials**
- **PACs**
- **Media representation**

Access to participation in the political process remains a critical issue for Latinos in Los Angeles County. Sheer numbers provide an indication of the community's potential political strength. For example, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1987 (IRCA) has created the potential for a new voter pool of two million immigrants eligible to vote in 1994. Furthermore, the Latino population in Los Angeles County is expected to increase substantially by the year 2000, adding significantly to the voter pool of the County.

It is evident that the mobilization and self-determination of Latinos through the political process will have far-reaching effects on potential Latino civic participation. To strengthen the community's political participation, programs that focus on education and on building a financial base of support for political candidates must be instituted.

The LACLAS study has identified the following program recommendations.

- **Conduct education and outreach programs for immigrants promoting naturalization and citizenship as a means of exercising their right to vote.**

  You can't vote if you aren't a citizen. The political impact of the Latino community will remain inconsequential unless it can be mobilized.

- **Educate Latinos on the importance and benefits of being a good citizen and having civic pride.**

  The question "Why should I bother to vote?" must be answered for Latinos. The benefits of participating in the process, such as being able to influence the allocation of public funds and helping to set public priorities, must be demonstrated in direct, relevant terms.

- **Involve Latinos, particularly third- and fourth-generation Latinos, in the political system in a practical, "nuts-and-bolts" way.**

  Third-generation Latinos may understand generally how the system works, but they may not know how to get involved. The process must be demystified so that ordinary citizens see a role for themselves.

The LACLAS study also identified the following strategic recommendations in the area of political participation.

- **Promote the development of simpler voting registration procedures.**

  Even well-educated people dislike filling out forms. Newly arrived immigrants are even more distrustful of them. Registration procedures must be made less intimidating and more accessible.

- **Promote the participation of Latinos in coalitions based on interest and not simply on ethnicity or race.**

  Latinos need not become solely involved in Latino causes. Issues relating to crime, health and housing affect all ethnic groups, and Latinos can make their presence felt by participating in the coalitions addressing such issues.

- **Promote the development of political agendas at the local community level.**

  No one knows the needs of the community better than the community itself. Latinos must come to understand that government should be from the bottom up, not from the top down.

- **Develop a fuller and broader Latino political agenda at the City and County levels in order to hold elected officials accountable.**

  What do Latinos expect from government? Have they forced government to focus on their needs? Latinos must evaluate whether elected officials are delivering on their promises.

- **Increase the community's interest and success in making its political representatives more accountable to them.**

  Political clout has been defined as the ability to reward one's friends and punish one's adversaries. Latinos must develop the capability for doing both.

- **Institute mechanisms to increase access to current elected/appointed officials.**

  You can't influence politicians if you can't reach them. The Latino community must develop ways of presenting its needs and concerns to policymakers.

- **Increase the number of Latino-backed Political Action Committees (PACs) and other interest groups, including those that contribute monetarily to political campaigns.**

  In politics, money talks. The ability to support financially the campaigns of elected officials is crucial to the development of political clout.

- **Increase the representation of Latinos in the media, which play an important role in promoting civic participation.**

  Public officials respect few things as much as they do the power of the media. Latino journalists can play a vital role in applying political pressure and in educating the community about the importance of political participation.

Education

Latinos represent the largest minority group in Los Angeles public school enrollment. Yet, Census data show that almost 60 percent of Latinos in Los Angeles County have less than a high school education. This is of great concern to the Latino community in view of the increasing complexity of American society and its need for a highly educated workforce.

Latino concerns center around three major areas: (1) reducing the high school drop-out rate, (2) increasing the number of Latinos pursuing higher education and (3) addressing the educational needs of immigrants and single parent families.

It is important that the following programmatic needs be addressed.

- **Increase the number of pre-school and early education programs for Latino children, with a special focus on the development of problem-solving skills.**

  Education that involves the development of critical thinking skills is frequently lacking in the first years of schooling. We must teach young children skills that will enable them to adapt to the constant change that American society is experiencing.

- **Increase the number of motivational programs that keep students in school and encourage parents to be more involved in their children's education.**

  Parents play a central role in their children's education. Parents who take an active interest in their child's work and create a home environment conducive to academic achievement can make the difference between that child's success or failure.

Goal:
To increase Latino educational attainment

Programs:
- **Pre-school and early education**
- **Parental involvement**
- **Bilingual education and ESL classes**
- **High school retention**
- **Community college intervention**
- **Adult education and basic literacy**
- **Higher education retention**

Strategies:
- **Latino teacher recruitment**
- **Curriculum reforms**
- **Teacher training**
- **Business initiatives for the very poor**

- **Increase the number of bilingual education and ESL classes taught by certified teachers.**

  The number of English-limited students continues to rise. We need more bilingual and ESL programs and more certified teachers to conduct them.

- **Develop high school retention programs that are relevant to Latinos and that include counseling and support systems.**

  The drop-out rate among Latino high school students is dismally high (approximately 50 percent). The reason a Latino drops out may be very different from that of an Anglo. Programs must factor in the cultural differences and provide the support and counseling to assure both achievement and retention.

- **Develop community college-level programs that provide support services to immigrants and drop-outs.**

  For most Latinos, community college is the gateway to higher learning. The vocational programs offered by community colleges are especially relevant to immigrants. The community college system must address more aggressively the educational needs of Latinos.

- **Develop adult education and basic literacy programs tailored to immigrants and returning students.**

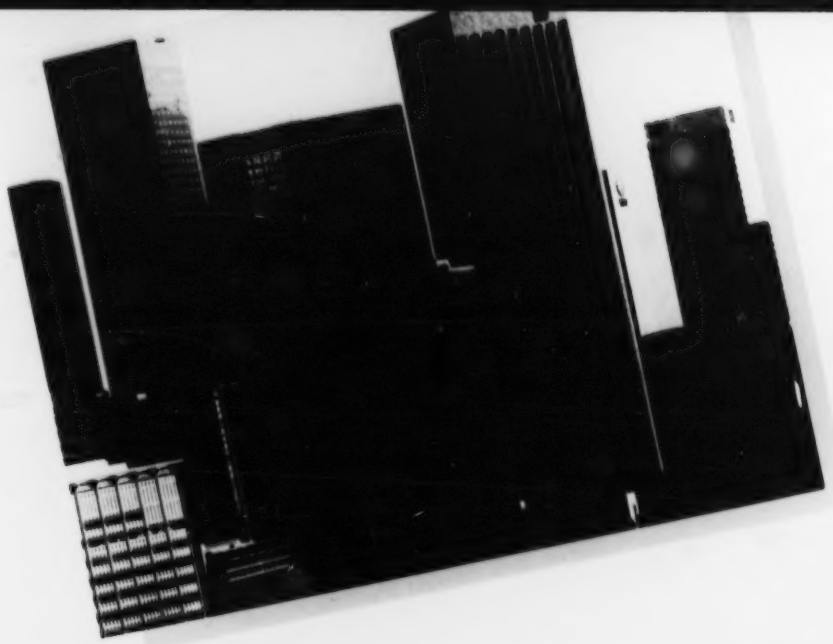
  It is very difficult to make it in America if you can't read. Programs that address the literacy needs of Latinos are imperative.

- **Increase the number of retention programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.**

  While the growing number of Latinos entering colleges is encouraging, the real question is how many are graduating. The same support systems needed at the high school level are also needed at the college level.

The LACLAS study also identified strategic recommendations with regard to education.

- **Increase Latino representation in administrative, faculty and staff positions.**
- **Implement curricular reforms at all levels, but particularly at the elementary and secondary levels.**
- **Improve the quality of teacher training in general and of bilingual teacher preparation in particular.**
- **Improve recruitment of Latinos into professions where there are current shortages.**
- **Assess the impact of amnesty and immigration on the educational system.**
- **Broaden the scope of business initiatives in the field of education to include the very poor.**



Economic Development

The United States finds itself in a hotly competitive world market in which the development and maintenance of a strong workforce is crucial to survival. Simultaneously and significantly, the Latino workforce is increasing as the non-minority workforce dwindles. The result? More employment opportunities for Latinos.

This is particularly true in Los Angeles County. Latino growth coincides with the region's growth as a business and financial center. Los Angeles serves as a gateway to the burgeoning Pacific Rim and is fast becoming an economic model for the rest of the United States. By the year 2000, it is projected that Los Angeles will be the second largest metropolitan area in the U.S.

Yet, the Latino community is ill-prepared to take full advantage of the opportunities available to it. Under-education, unemployment, poverty and alienation continue to hamper the Latino community to realize its economic potential. To address this crisis, remedies must focus on (1) economic empowerment, (2) job development and (3) employment training.

The following program recommendations to advance the economic status of Latinos are forwarded by the LACLAS study.

- **Develop initiatives that lend financial support to Latino entrepreneurial efforts.**

  Financing a new business endeavor is difficult. Financial institutions must develop special marketing efforts for soliciting and increasing the number of Latino-owned businesses.

Goal:
To enable Latinos to take full advantage of the County's economic growth

Programs:
- **Financing entrepreneurial efforts**
- **Child care**
- **Private sector familiarization with Latino labor force needs**
- **Technical education and training**
- **Apprenticeship opportunities**

Strategies:
- **Access to policymaking boards and commissions allocating resources**
- **Long-range economic development**
- **Investment dollars for Latino businesses**
- **Business initiatives for low and middle classes**
- **Private and public sector contracting**
- **Elimination of discrimination in the workplace**
- **Support of Latinos in the labor movement**

- **Develop subsidized child care programs for Latino working parents (especially single parents).**

  The high cost of day care limits the job possibilities of many poor Latinos. A big economic boost could be given to Latinos through affordable and accessible child care systems, particularly at the worksite.

- **Develop initiatives that not only educate the private sector about the importance of reaching Latinos but also assess how Latinos can best be educated (or trained) to meet the needs of the private sector.**

  People who have jobs most likely have them because they have a skill an employer needs. We need to match employers' needs with Latino skills.

- **Develop education and training programs that provide technical knowledge regarding economic development and procurement.**

  Entrepreneurship requires a technical understanding of legal and economic processes. Without such knowledge, the economic viability of the Latino community will be hindered.

- **Develop mentorship programs that will assist aspiring Latino business professionals.**

  Most successful professionals can point to one or two people who, somewhere along the way, took them under their wing. Young Latinos who aspire to a profession need such mentors to help them over the unique hurdles they will face.

- **Develop work study programs that include apprenticeship positions in business and the professions.**

  Nothing teaches like hands-on experience. If corporate America is serious about helping Latinos, it needs to school Latinos in realistic occupational settings.

The following strategic recommendations were made to advance the economic status of Latinos.

- **Promote Latino participation on policymaking and resource allocation bodies.**

  Latinos are rarely represented in policymaking bodies that make the critical decisions that affect their community economically. Latinos also need to become involved in the allocation of funds so that the total community benefits.

- **Establish long-range economic development plans for local Latino communities.**

  How many jobs are there in Latino communities, now and in the future? How can we build and support the economies of predominantly Latino communities? These questions must be systematically addressed by policymakers, and Latinos must participate in that process.

- **Promote easier access for Latino businesses to the investment dollars of lending institutions.**

  Lending policies should be designed to help, not exclude, Latino business enterprises in need of capital.

- **Promote more Latino business collaborations.**

  Latinos doing business with other Latinos could have a tremendously positive impact on Latino economic development.

- **Promote a greater emphasis on business initiatives that move poor Latinos into the middle class, not simply middle class Latinos into the upper class.**

  It may be less difficult to help middle class Latinos climb the ladder, but if we don't simultaneously help poor Latinos, an irreversible gap will soon exist between the two groups.

- **Promote more private and public sector contracting and subcontracting to Latino firms.**

  Many Latino firms have demonstrated competence in handling public and private contracts. They should be encouraged to compete for such work and be given sufficient technical assistance to obtain these contracts.

- **Promote efforts to reduce discrimination in the workplace.**

  Nothing is more destructive of Latino economic advancement than unchallenged workplace discrimination. We may not be able to eliminate prejudice and sexism, but we can certainly make sure the existing anti-discrimination laws are strictly enforced.

- **Promote a greater responsiveness to the needs of Latinos in the labor movement.**

  Turning to organized labor unions is often the only recourse Latinos have to ensure job security. Latinos in the labor movement need resources and the support of other agencies concerned with workplace advancement.

Leadership Development

The Latino community in Los Angeles County faces challenges in many areas. But to address fully a Latino agenda for action, existing Latino leadership must be supported and new leadership developed to help realize hopes for the development of the community.

Goal:
To enhance Latino leadership capabilities at all levels

Programs:
- **Leadership training and development**
- **Development of negotiating skills**
- **Bridge-building between "old and new guard" leadership**

Latino growth in the County goes hand in hand with the need for more Latino leaders in both the public and private sectors. The growing number of Latinos, particularly recent immigrants, provides a rich and ever larger pool from which to draw leaders.

However, the Latino leadership base will not expand unless several needs are addressed. The following program recommendations have been identified.

- **Create more and broader leadership training and development programs that focus on technical, decision-making and coalition-building skills.**

  Leadership skills can be taught. With training, Latinos can develop their skills and apply them to solving the community's problems.

- **Provide programs addressing the development of negotiating skills that enable Latinos to handle differences of opinion openly and constructively and Latino leaders to obtain support from non-Latinos.**

  In the development of public policy, rarely is anything simple. Numerous special interest groups, both within the Latino community and outside, must be brought together for a common purpose. Those who are skilled at negotiation are successful leaders.

- **Encourage programs that promote bridge-building between "old and new guard" leadership.**

  The so-called "generation gap" is alive and well in the Latino community. Older, more settled Latinos may see things very differently from recent immigrants. Bridges between the old and the new must be built.

Additional Funding Priorities

Of no less importance than the four funding priorities described above are the six priorities that follow. In the case of these priorities, however, there was consensus that advances in these areas are contingent on progress in the four priority funding areas. In the meantime, the LACLAS study offers the following solutions to pressing needs in these areas.

Health

Health care in Los Angeles County is becoming more and more expensive because of its for-profit orientation. As the Latino community struggles with poverty and unemployment, so does it suffer from lack of access to adequate health care. Better health care for Latinos requires a multi-pronged, coordinated approach that includes government, the community, the health insurance industry and medical providers.

The primary recommendation of the LACLAS study is to convene a task force to assess the delivery of health care services to Latinos and to develop a short-term plan for addressing unmet needs. The task force would include health care providers, community activists, consumer advocates, church group members, as well as representatives from the corporate and governmental sectors.

Program priorities of immediate importance are:

- preventive care programs, including prenatal/postnatal care programs;
- education programs that focus on health promotion (e.g., diet, self-examination);
- outreach programs that increase knowledge about available services with special emphasis on the elderly;
- mental health programs that deal with stress and other issues (e.g., drugs, violence); and
- programs that address the shortage of Latinos in the health professions, particularly those who work with immigrants.

Social Services

Many obstacles hinder the improvement of social services for Latinos in Los Angeles County. These obstacles are closely related to the other needs addressed in this study. Principal among them are the political processes that govern the allocation of public funds for social services; the multi-layered bureaucracy of the public social service system; the lack of private sector funding and the fact that the focus of social services changes with the times.

Thus, it is recommended that a task force be convened to assess the adequacy of social services for Latinos in Los Angeles County and to develop a plan for addressing unmet needs. The task force would include a broad spectrum of individuals with first-hand knowledge of the deficiencies of the social service system.

Program priorities of immediate importance include:

- leadership and personal growth/development programs for children and youth;
- more high quality, subsidized child care programs; and
- outreach programs that make social services more accessible to vulnerable groups (e.g., high-risk youth, single mothers, the elderly, Spanish monolinguals).

Immigration

More than 40 percent of all immigrants coming to the United States are from Latin America, and a significantly large percentage of these immigrants look to Los Angeles County as their point of destination. Latino immigrants face unique problems and needs that are so numerous, it would be difficult to address them all in the near future. Too many competing interests (business, government, community) are involved. Division exists within the Latino community regarding immigrant issues. The federal government makes decisions regarding immigration issues without input from local government. And, the nature of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) itself hampers immigration reform.

Even more challenging is the need to change prevailing social attitudes. The negative image of Latino immigrants as a drain on and burden to society is detrimental to the Latino community. Latino immigrants must not be used as scapegoats for economic and social problems such as unplanned growth, crime and inadequate housing.

The rights of Latino immigrants must be redefined and those who are naturalized must be mobilized to make use of their newly acquired rights as citizens.

Immediate program priorities include:

- outreach programs to make immigrants more aware of community services;
- programs that target disrupted immigrant families;
- programs for immigrants who are eligible for amnesty; and
- programs that sensitize agencies working with immigrants.

Legal Services

The American legal system is both a potential blessing and a potential curse for Latinos. Although predicated on protecting the rights of citizens, the legal system often falls short of that goal in the Latino community.

The legal needs of Latinos in Los Angeles County include legal assistance for immigrants; access to community legal aid services; access to civil court representation; assistance with landlord disputes; assistance with discrimination matters; assistance in cases involving victimization by social, health and legal services; and availability of Spanish language interpreters.

Immediate program priorities include:

- low-cost community legal aid services;
- legal service programs that will assist immigrants, especially those not eligible for amnesty; and
- paralegal training programs aimed at Latinos.

Crime

The incidence of crime and violence is on the rise in all urban communities, and Los Angeles County is no exception. For the Latino community, the problem of crime is interrelated with other problems, making it much more difficult to tackle. To reduce crime effectively, its relationship with (a) economic survival issues and (b) the weakening of the family structure needs to be addressed. Stereotyping of the Latino family contributes to low self-esteem and poor self-image. Efforts to bring together community, family and church have been piecemeal or non-existent.

There is a need to look at crime in the Latino community, particularly with respect to gangs and drugs, as a manifestation of the larger problems besetting Latino communities. There is a need to minimize or eliminate crime as a "defining characteristic" of Latino communities. Two major needs were identified: (1) improving community/police relationships and (2) holding the media (television and the movie industry) more accountable for their glorification of gangs and drugs.

Immediate program priorities include:

- youth diversion programs;
- family-focused crime prevention education programs;
- community-based drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs;
- education and job training/placement programs designed for young Latino offenders; and
- media projects that provide positive role models for Latinos.

Housing

Housing issues have been severely neglected due to the pressing nature of other societal problems. Allocation of public resources for affordable housing has been declining even as soaring home prices in Los Angeles County have placed home ownership out of reach for many Latinos. The fact is that fewer Latinos own their homes compared with any other racial or ethnic group in the County.

To address the housing crisis, several strategies have been recommended, including increasing Latino representation on policy-setting groups pertaining to such issues as rent control and promoting public/private partnerships for affordable housing. It is also recommended that special attention be given to the housing needs of undocumented immigrants.

Immediate program priorities include:

- public/private partnerships including community-based organizations to create affordable housing appropriate for the larger size of Latino families;
- housing programs for the Latino youth-at-risk and homeless (which typically involve entire families);
- revitalization programs for Latino neighborhoods;
- educational programs to inform Latinos, particularly single parent families, about the availability of affordable housing; and
- mortgage programs to foster first-time home ownership for Latinos.

Next Steps

Through the Los Angeles County Latino Assessent Study, the Latino community and its leadership have identified their most pressing areas of concern -- political participation, education, economic development, leadership development, health, social services, immigration, legal services, crime and housing.

The issues raised in ***One Voice, One Future*** are not new. The LACLAS study was aimed at those who may not be as familiar with the issues and who are seeking to provide meaningful assistance to the Latino community.

What are the next steps? What are the practical implications of the LACLAS study?

The LACLAS study offers a proactive agenda to assist in the future development of the Latino community. The next step is clearly the *comprehensive involvement* of public and private entities in issue selection and program design and implementation, with particular emphasis on those strategies affecting ***women and children.***

The Tomás Rivera Center and the Community Advisory Council of the LACLAS study urge corporations, foundations, governmental entities, private sector agencies, professional associations, community-based organizations and others to adopt specific plans of action. These plans should not merely select one area under one heading, but should be comprehensive and designed to attack the larger problems facing the community. This study recommends issue selection as the first step, followed by program design and implementation.

Issue Selection

1. Select one of the ten funding priorities addressed in the study for comprehensive involvement. By comprehensive involvement, we mean activities that address entire areas of concern, not merely individual issues.
2. Assign staff to make recommendations for the selected priority area based on available resources.
3. Conduct inquiries as necessary.

Program Design

1. Network with other organizations to combine efforts and/or share experiences so as to maximize results.
2. Establish an advisory board of community experts and leaders.
3. Make efforts to advance the agenda throughout the organization; involve staff from all departments.

Program Implementation

1. Monitor program effectiveness and impact on an ongoing basis.
2. Evaluate and share results of program(s).

Finally, it is critical that the process not stop here, but that other policy areas identified in the study be selected and addressed in the same comprehensive manner. In this way, the challenges and opportunities facing Latinos in this and the next century can be met.

Summary Review of Recommendations for Funding Priorities

Political Participation

Goal: To increase levels of Latino political involvement

Programs:

- Naturalization and citizenship
- Civic pride
- Practical aspects of political process

Education

Goal: To increase Latino educational attainment

Programs:

- Pre-school and early education
- Parental involvement
- Bilingual education and ESL classes
- High school retention
- Community college intervention
- Adult education and basic literacy
- Higher education retention

Economic Development

Goal: To enable Latinos to take full advantage of Los Angeles County's economic growth

Programs:

- Financing entrepreneurial efforts
- Child care
- Private sector familiarization with Latino labor force needs
- Technical education and training
- Apprenticeship opportunities

Leadership Development

Goal: To enhance Latino leadership capabilities at all levels

Programs:

- Leadership training and development
- Development of negotiating skills
- Bridge-building between "old and new guard" leadership

Health

Goal: To maximize the Latino community's access to the health care system

Programs:

- Preventive care including prenatal/postnatal care
- Health education
- Outreach regarding available services with emphasis on the elderly
- Mental health
- Recruitment of Latinos to the health professions

Social Services

Goal: To maximize the Latino community's access to social services
Programs:

- Leadership and personal development for children and youth
- High-quality subsidized child care
- Outreach to vulnerable groups

Immigration

Goal: To optimize transition assistance for Latino immigrants
Programs:

- Community services outreach
- Support services for disrupted immigrant families
- Programs for amnesty applicants
- Sensitization of agencies working with immigrants

Legal Services

Goal: To increase legal assistance to Latinos
Programs:

- Low-cost community legal aid services
- Legal services for immigrants
- Paralegal training

Crime

Goal: To achieve a crime-free environment
Programs:

- Youth diversion
- Family-focused crime prevention education
- Community-based drug and alcohol abuse prevention
- Education and job training and placement for young Latino offenders
- Media projects with positive role models

Housing

Goal: To expand the supply of affordable housing for Latinos
Programs:

- Public/private partnerships including community-based organizations to create affordable housing
- Housing for the Latino youth-at-risk and Latino homeless
- Revitalization of Latino neighborhoods
- Education/information dissemination about availability of affordable housing
- Mortgage programs to foster first-time home ownership for Latinos

The Tomás Rivera Center is a national, nonprofit institute for policy studies which began operating in January 1985 with the support of major grants from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation and the Times Mirror Foundation. Its mission is to assist policymakers in understanding the issues affecting the quality of life of the Mexican-origin and larger Hispanic population of the United States.

The Center is dedicated to the memory of one of its founders, the late Tomás Rivera (1935-1984), distinguished educator, prizewinning writer, and, at the time of his death, chancellor of the University of California, Riverside.

Photos: *Courtesy of La Opinion*

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